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## Letter from Thomas G. Clemson to Elias Baker, 1868 January 16

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Beverly January 16<sup>th</sup> 1848

My dear Sir

Elizabeth wrote me in her last letter dated Dec. that she had seen you in Philadelphia in a short time previous & that you were looking very well & appeared to be in fine health & spirits, she said that Woody was studying in the City and that Aunt & Sylvester were equally well with yourself. I hope you may all continue to do equally good year to come. From a letter received some time since from Woody I judged that I should have had the pleasure of seeing him in Europe before this, but from what Elizabeth says or rather does not say, he has postponed his visit over the Atlantic. I should not be surprised if I should see all my relations in the United States, before seeing them in Europe. In my younger days I thought nothing of a trip to Europe but if I were once more in the United States & comfortably fixed according to my inclinations I don't think that I should be easily induced to move far from home. I have no curiosity to gratify by travelling & a year will on man naturally become less inclined to locomotion. I have unfortunately been so much from the United States, that I am less at home there than in some parts of Europe, that is to say I have fewer acquaintances. My position here is an isolated one in some respects, I know a great many people

it is true but they are the acquaintance of official position and not generally such as I would select for friends. Most of those that are met with in the circle in which I am obliged to move, are persons belonging to the nobility and are generally very rich so that the small pay I receive from the United States does not go a great way. Still as small as that pay comparatively may be it affords me a living for myself and family and on that account I content myself where I am. I should like very much to live near to my relations where I could have the pleasure of seeing them from time to time but that appears to be forbid me. When in the United States the duty always occupied I could never get on in the world and I judge that it was owing to my want of a knowledge of business. Man has to take things as he finds them and tho I support myself here perhaps, and as far as I know I could not do better in the United States. I am well aware that I am getting to be good for nothing & if I remain here much longer shall be fit for nothing else, all of which will not prevent the Government from sending me a successor if it pleases them to do so. Notwithstanding I live on contentedly from day because I can do no better.

I was very much distressed to hear through Elizabeth that Mother was so feeble it pains me very much to think of the subject & that I should be so far away from her I know that I could not mitigate her situation yet it would give me the greatest pleasure to see her & it might be the means of giving her a little pleasure if all her children were

new here. & I have no doubt she would be gratified at seeing  
my two children. My eldest boy I call Calhoun after his Grand  
father (he is not yet seven years old). My Girl who is eighteen  
months younger than her brother is named Floride Eliza, after  
after her two grandmothers. They have but little recollection  
of persons or things in the United States for they have been now  
nearly or about half their lives distant from it which at their  
age makes a great difference. They begin to read & write &  
are a great deal of company to their parents. The line is retired  
as possible, but still are obliged to go out a good deal. Owing to  
the death of Louis Philippe's sister Adelaide, the Aunt of the  
Queen of Belgium there has been but little gaiety in Brussels  
since that occurred. The balls & parties will commence again  
in February. Such is the force of circumstance and position all  
the ladies of the Diplomatic corps have to appear in public  
in black as if their nearest relative had died such is etiquette in  
certain positions. Many persons envy a diplomatic position abroad  
but there is neither profit or much pleasure connected with them  
and if I had the money that the place gives any one would be  
perfectly welcome to the coat.

If I have not written you my dear Sir since the last letter  
which Woody may find enough to write me, it was not because I  
did not often think of you & hoped you were doing as well as you  
deserved but merely because I had nothing very particularly in-  
teresting to communicate & have a pretty heavy correspondence  
with the Government and on official business. My occupations  
here are so foreign to what most probably would interest you



that I fear I could scarce make my letter worthy of the perusal or worth the postage. My former occupations in the way of science live merely in my recollection and among the things that had been I must now wish for other things than glory or honour & however I might feel personally the disposition to prosecute science even if the occupation would not keep my naked garments covered, the necessities of my family forbid it & I with the rest of mankind must be governed by necessities.

As to the State of Europe Politically speaking every thing is tranquil and would it be otherwise without some great cause, in the face of the immense standing armies which are kept up to sustain monarch and monarchial institutions. Even this little Kingdom where population is so dense that many die from starvation, there is a standing army which costs the Government nearly thirty millions of Francs per annum & that with a population of not more than four million five hundred thousand souls. The weather here during the fall and winter thus far has been unusually pleasant for Belgium where it used to rain almost every day. We have had but little or no snow & the weather tho sometimes cold very pleasant and dry. The influenza or Grippe as it is called here has been very prevalent in England and on the continent but not so fatal here as in the first mentioned country where during its greatest prevalence there were more deaths than when the cholera prevailed. The financial condition of England is recovering tho still there is no want of failures, but they are chiefly confined to smaller houses.

Anna joins me in a great deal of love to yourself & Aunt & that you may be blessed with all that you and your family can desire & that Heaven may visit you all with its choicest blessings is the sincere wish of your affectionate friend and nephew

Thos. S. Allen

Eliza Baker Esq.